at least one optical line amplifier for amplifying said [at least] one subgroup of optical signals [corresponding to said at least ] associated with said one subwindow within the operating window.

14. (Amended) A method for modular amplification of optical signals in a set of multiple channels in an operating window of a fiber communication network, comprising the steps of:

providing a plurality of subwindows within said operating window;

multiplexing the optical signals in the set of multiple channels into at least one subgroup of optical signals associated with one of said plurality of subwindows [in a corresponding at least one subwindow] within the operating window, such that each subwindow corresponds[ing] to and is associated with a different group of channels within the operating window; and

amplifying said [at least] one subgroup of optical signals [corresponding to said at least ] associated with said one subwindow within the operating window.

27. (Amended) A system for modular amplification of optical signals in a set of multiple channels in an erbium band operating window of a fiber communication network, comprising:

first and second wavelength division multiplexing units; and

a fiber link, having at least one optical fiber, optical coupling said first and second wavelength division multiplexing units;

wherein said first and second wavelength division multiplexing units each comprises a coarse WDM unit and at least one fine WDM unit; whereby fine WDM units can be added to the system in a modular fashion to support channels in respective subwindows as needed.

28. (Amended) The system of claim 27, further comprising, at least one optical line amplifier and dispersion compensation unit provided along [each] said at least one optical fiber in said fiber link, whereby, [each] a plurality of optical line amplifier